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AT THE CROSSROADS OF GRAMMATICALIZATION AND
PRAGMATICALIZATION: A DIACHRONIC CROSS-LINGUISTIC
CASE STUDY ON *VRAIMENT* AND *REALLY*

Abstract

This article focuses on the French form *vraiment* and English *really* – two adverbs which share a core meaning and show an overlapping polysemy in present-day discourse. On the basis of a detailed analysis of French and English historical corpus data, this study traces both adverbs back to their earliest uses, revealing some surprising differences as well as connections between *vraiment* and *really* in their respective developments from pure semantic adverbs to markers of subjective and pragmatic emphasis. In addition, diachronic evidence is given for the hypothesis (cf. Willems and Demol 2006) that *vraiment* and *really* have undergone a double process of meaning extension, resulting in a highly grammaticalized use as an intensifier with a narrow scope, and in more subjective, utterance-initial uses with a broader scope through a process of pragmaticalization. Finally, this study wants to help integrate relevant results on the two adverbs into an elaboration of a semantic map of *veritas* and *realitas*.

Keywords: Contrastive linguistics (French / English), corpus linguistics, historical linguistics, grammaticalization, pragmaticalization.

1. Research context and aims

Vraiment and *really* can both be situated within a larger context of notions of ‘truth’ and ‘reality’¹. Contrastive research based on data collected from the *Namur Corpus*² has shown that *truly*, rather than *really*, is the semantic cognate of *vraiment*, and *réellement*, rather than *vraiment*, forms the morpho-semantic cognate of *really* (cf. Figure 1). However, *vraiment* and *really* show extensive semantic overlap in their present-day functions (cf. Willems and Demol 2006), as well as in their historical developments – which is why they were selected as the focus of the present article.

¹ The research reported on in this article was carried out in the framework of the Project ‘Grammaticalization & (Inter)Subjectification’ (Project Number P6/44 Interuniversity Attraction Poles), funded by the Belgian Science Policy. One of the aims of the Ghent University component of this project is to map the semantic and pragmatic connections between a number of selected forms, including *vraiment* and *really*, creating an elaborate semantic map. A more detailed description of this semantic map can be found in Simon-Vandenberghe and Willems (2010). The authors wish to thank the editor and anonymous referees for their constructive feedback.

² For information on the *Namur Corpus*: http://www.kuleuven-kortrijk.be/~hpauluss/NC/NC_descri.html (03/04/2012)

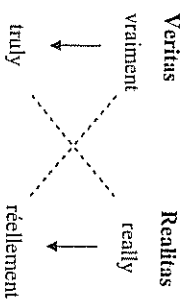


Figure 1. (Morpho-)semantic cognates of *vraiment* and *really*.

First of all, the present article provides a detailed analysis of the historical developments of *vraiment* and *really*, to attest whether differences or similarities in use, pace of development or level of grammaticalization and / or pragmaticalization can be related to differences in the syntax or semantics of the forms' earliest appearances. Secondly, these historical developments can be seen as case studies that may support a more theoretical hypothesis, initially suggested by Willems and Demol (2006). In a synchronic and contrastive study, they compare their own analysis of present-day uses of *vraiment* with existing (synchronic) literature on *really*, and find that *vraiment* and *really* are not only equivalents in terms of core meaning ('truth identifier') but also function on similar levels of meaning extension (i.e. as emphasizing and intensifying subjuncts, and as disjuncts) in present-day discourse. The theoretical hypothesis that is made on the basis of their present-day analysis, is that *vraiment* and *really* have undergone a 'double meaning extension', involving both pragmaticalization and grammaticalization patterns. Our aim in this article is to take a detailed look at the historical developments of *vraiment* and *really*, and attest the theoretical hypothesis made in Willems and Demol (2006).

More specifically, this would entail that, on the one hand, the forms have evolved from clause-internal manner adverbs with a referential meaning in their earliest uses to forms that increasingly adopt more pragmatic and subjective meanings when shifted to less integrated (viz. frequently utterance-initial) syntactic positions, through a process of pragmaticalization. On the other hand, the forms have developed into intensifiers with a narrow scope through what appears to be a different kind of process, namely one of grammaticalization. More specifically, this dual development is hypothesized to create the following distinction. Pragmaticalized occurrences – illustrated in (a) – often take the form of disjuncts (cf. section 3), which are generally disconnected (syntactically and prosodically) from the rest of the sentence and can often be found in sentence-initial or final position. Their marginal syntactic position tends to correlate with a broadened scope, and as a consequence also with a higher level of subjectivity, i.e. a clearer expression of the speaker's perspective on or evaluation of (the contents of) the entire sentence.

- (a) Parce que là chez moi maintenant j'ai une Martiniquaise hein, mais alors **vraiment**, bon, elle a la peau noire quoi, elle est bon Française hein, mais euh elle a la peau noire. (Corpax)

[Because I have a woman from Martinique staying at my place, but really, well, she has a black skin, she is French though, but she has a black skin.]

Really, this question is surprising. (Stenström 1986: 151)

In contrast, the same forms may undergo a distinct process of grammaticalization, through which they become more integrated and acquire a narrow scope – functioning as intensifying subjuncts (cf. section 3) on a phrasal level, prototypically modifying adjectives, rather than on a broader sentence level (illustrated under (b)).

- (b) L'anglais il domine toute l'Europe: que tout le monde se mette à parler seulement en anglais je trouve ça euh je trouverais ça **vraiment** ridicule. (Corpax)

[English dominates Europe entirely: that everybody would start talking only English, I would find that really ridiculous.]

This question is **really** surprising. (Stenström 1986: 151)

This hypothesis will be verified by means of a detailed study of the diachronic developments of both adverbs, respectively from the 14th (*vraiment*) and 15th (*really*) century onwards.

Our core questions are therefore the following:

- Which semantic and pragmatic meanings can be found for French *vraiment* and English *really*, in the different layers of their historical developments?
- Can any differences in the semantic-pragmatic meaning development, pace and level of grammaticalization and / or pragmaticalization be traced back to the forms' core semantics and early historical contexts?
- Can our results confirm a hypothesis of dual development, through which the studied adverbs have developed pragmatic and / or intensifying uses, respectively through the influence of processes of pragmaticalization and grammaticalization?

2. Methodology and theoretical background

The results presented in this paper are based on analyses of data from a selection of French and English corpora. For French *vraiment* this includes historical data collected from the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (DMF, 1330-1500) and from the *Frantext* database (1500-2000). The DMF contains 250 text documents in various genres (mainly philosophical treatises, religious texts and battle narratives). *Frantext* offers texts in various literary genres (novels, plays, travel stories).

While this article has a diachronic focus, a brief comparison will be made with present-day corpus material from *Franeur* (20th century) and the *Corpaix* corpus (present-day spoken French), to obtain an overall picture of the modern uses of *vraiement*.

For the English component, three historical corpus collections were used, covering a period from Old English (c. 800) until 1920. These include the *Helinski Corpus of English Texts* (HC) (c. 800–1710), *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (CED), and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (Extended Version)* (CLMETEV) (1710–1920). These three corpus collections provide a variety of text genres, ranging from biblical texts to trial proceedings, letters and literary fiction. The CED contains dialogues, which offer a representation of spoken discourse and are therefore particularly interesting for historical research.

The synchronic polysemy of *really* has been described extensively in a number of publications (e.g. Stenström 1986, Simon-Vandenberg 1988, Paradis 2003). Our own description of the form's present-day functions is therefore limited to a sample study of data from the *British National Corpus* (BNC), complemented by references to existing synchronic studies.

The parameters taken into account for our analyses and data classification include structural as well as semantic-pragmatic criteria. The semantic division of adverbs made in Quirk et al. (1985) (i.e. adjuncts, emphasizing and intensifying subjuncts, and disjuncts) forms the basis for an initial distinction. Semantic verb categories (based on the division made in Biber et al. 1999) were also taken into account. This semantic level naturally correlates with differences in syntax (see further, section 3); structural parameters therefore include syntactic position (based on Quirk et al. 1985) as well as scope (narrow or broad) and structural level (sentence, clause or phrase level). On a pragmatic level, we also want to pay attention to the different discourse functions and underlying attitudes that can additionally be deduced. Correlations between speaker attitude (i.e. degree of subjectivity) and scope will be taken into account (also cf. section 3), again drawing a connection between semantic-pragmatic and structural parameters.

The results from the diachronic analyses are interpreted in the theoretical frameworks of grammaticalization, pragmaticalization and (inter)subjectification. These provide hypotheses that can account for a number of structural and / or semantic-pragmatic changes of individual discourse markers in their historical developments (also cf. Defour et al. 2010a, 2010b). Our focus will be on the relationship between grammaticalization and pragmaticalization for which *vraiement* and *really* reveal themselves as interesting case studies of a double process of language change, as was suggested by Willems and Demol (2006).

In Traugott and König (1991: 189) grammaticalization is defined as “the dynamic, unidirectional historical process whereby lexical items in the course of time acquire a new status as grammatical, morpho-syntactic forms, and in the process come to code relations that either were not coded before or were coded differently.” As

stated in Traugott (1995), structural changes (e.g. shift from a medial towards an utterance-initial position) can correlate with semantic changes (e.g. shift from a propositional to a discursive function).

The development of discourse markers has – wrongly, in Traugott's view – been excluded from the grammaticalization process in several studies (e.g. Haspel-math 1999, Heine and Kuteva 2002) and this for a double reason. First, there is the supposed incompatibility with the principle of unidirectionality. Secondly, pragmatic markers can be considered not to be part of grammar. Traugott (1995), however, states that the association of discourse markers and grammaticalization is not in conflict with the principle of unidirectionality if it is redefined in terms of cognition and communication. Unidirectionality would then respectively imply the evolution from a more concrete to a more general and abstract meaning, and the evolution from a less subjective to a more subjective use. As for the second reason, all depends on whether ‘grammar’ is defined in a narrow sense, i.e. limited to morpho-syntactic, phonological, lexical and semantic elements, or in a broad sense, i.e. also including pragmatic elements.

In order to offer a solution for the above problem the term ‘pragmaticalization’ was coined to indicate specifically the grammaticalization of discourse markers (cf. Aijmer (2002: 18–19) who refers to pragmaticalization as a categorical limit of grammaticalization when applying to the development of discourse particles). If this is the case, pragmaticalization cannot be considered to be essentially different from grammaticalization and is then a subclass of grammaticalization (cf. Diwald 2011: 365). This implies a correlation between the two processes. However, the diachronic evolutions of *vraiement* and *really* provide evidence for the fact that pragmaticalization and grammaticalization should be defined as independent – as was suggested by Onodera (2000: 45–46) – or at least distinct, but related processes. For the present study, we will apply Onodera's definition of pragmaticalization (cf. Onodera 2004: 12) as “a process of meaning / functional change involving shifts from the semantic to the pragmatic domain”. Onodera (2004: 13) defines pragmatics as “the study of the meaning of sentences in context, i.e. the meaning of the utterances, while semantics is the study of the meaning of the sentences.”

Finally, this study hypothesizes that an underlying motivation for an (inter)subjective reading, i.e. a meaning embedded in the subjective perspective of the speaker and with attention for the hearer's perspective, can be found in the core semantics of *vraiement* and *really*.

3. Present-day uses of *vraiement* and *really*

The semantic-pragmatic uses of *vraiement* and *really* have been examined in a number of synchronic studies, specifically in the case of *really* (e.g. Stenström 1986, De Cooman 2001, Paradis 2003, Willems and Demol 2006). The following overview of present-day uses of *vraiement* and *really* is therefore based on previous studies and on supplementary synchronic corpus analysis. The uses presented

here have been classified according to the distinction into adjuncts, subjuncts and disjuncts made in Quint et al. (1985).

On a clausal level, adverbs can function as manner adjuncts. While *really* only occurs as a manner adjunct in the earliest stages of its development (cf. section 4.3), *vraiment* still has a typical adverbial use in present-day discourse, as in example (1).

- (1) [...] et donc de ne pas avoir **vraiment** conquis ma mère, mais de l'avoir artificiellement et artificieusement séduite. (Frantext, 1985)
[and so of not having sincerely conquered my mother, but rather to have seduced her in an artificial and artful way.]

In this example *vraiment* stands in contrast to *artificiellement* et *artificieusement* and can be considered an equivalent of the adverb *sincèrement* ('sincerely'). The scope is limited to the verb.

When used as an emphasizing subjunct (hereafter called 'emphasizer'), *vraiment* and *really* generally function on a clausal level (examples (2) and (3)). They are then usually placed in medial position and emphasize the truth value of the part of discourse next to which they are placed – as in:

- (2) J'avais donc **vraiment** l'impression de ne pas avoir de visage, de n'être personne si je ne construisais pas mon image. (Frantext, 1999)
[I really had the impression of not having a face, of being nobody if I did not create my image.]
- (3) I **really** think you are what you eat. (BNC)

When subjuncts apply to gradable processes (expressed by gradable verbs – as in example 4), or properties expressed by adjectives, adverbs or even nouns (examples 5-7), they take on the status of an intensifying subjunct (hereafter 'intensifier') which functions on a phrasal level.

- (4) He **really** likes her.
- (5) I've been **really**, really good today. (BNC)
- (6) Il parle **vraiment** bien l'argot. (Corpax)
[He speaks slang really well.]
- (7) Un homme **vraiment** ami de l'humanité. (Frantext)
[A man truly friend of humanity.]

In contrast, disjuncts generally appear in a more marginal syntactic position – often sentence-initially, parenthetically or finally, detached from the rest of the sentence

– and have a scope that extends over the entire sentence, rather than over just a part of it. *Vraiment* and *really* can be called attitudinal disjuncts, reflecting the speaker's perspective that "what is being said is true" (Quirk et al. 1985: 583) and they therefore indicate a high degree of subjectivity. Disjunct uses frequently convey pragmatic meanings and can be used as strengtheners (examples 8-9) or softeners (example 10), or can express surprise, indignation or irony.

- (8) Alors **vraiment** quand on est au théâtre on se met en question. (Corpax)
[Well really, when one visits the theatre, one questions oneself.]
- (9) **Really**, I don't think that's the case.
- (10) They're sad people, **really**. (BNC)

In addition, *vraiment* and *really* can also appear autonomously in an answer (examples 11 and 14), a question (examples 12 and 14) or an exclamation (example 13).

- (11) Allez-vous souvent au théâtre?
– Non, pas **vraiment**. (Corpax)
[Do you often go to the theatre? – No, not really.]
- (12) Hier soir, je vous ai vus. Je suis passé à côté de vous.
– **Vraiment**? (Corpax)
[I saw you, yesterday evening. I passed right next to you. – Really?]
- (13) Alors là, **vraiment**! (Corpax)
[Now, really!]
- (14) I want you, Maura. – [...] – **Really**? [...] –
Yes... **really**. (BNC)

The forms can then be accompanied by *oui / non / pas* or *yes / no / not*. When used autonomously, *vraiment* and *really* can again convey subjective shades of meaning such as surprise (examples 12 and 14) or indignation (example 13).

4. The diachronic development of *vraiment* and *really*

4.1. *Classification of historical data*
Sections 4.2. and 4.3. give a detailed description of the diachronic uses of *vraiment* and *really*, in various stages of their developments. For each form, a classification has been made according to semantic uses (i.e. adjunct, emphasizing subjunct,

intensifying subjunct, disjunct, autonomous), structural level (sentence, clause, phrase) and scope (i.e. narrow or wide), syntactic position, and semantic verb fields (based on the division made in Biber et al. 1999) – which will be discussed in greater detail where relevant. As for the corpus material, random samples were used and, whenever this was possible, the periods suggested by the corpus were respected. For French, however, the *Frantext* corpus is of such a size that periodization was made according to subsections of c. 100 years.

4.2. The semantic-pragmatic development of *vraiment*

The French form *vraiment* has its origin in the adverb *vraielement* (c. 12th century), derived from the Old French adjective *verai*. This adjective in turn originates in the Latin adjective *veracius* (cf. *FEW*, *veracius*, adj. I). *Veracius* is a late variant of *verax* ('true, honest'), in itself a reinforced variant of the regular classical Latin adjective *verus*. It is interesting to observe that the rather broad meaning that *verus* had ('true, real, legitimate, sincere') was restricted in the later meaning of *verax*, which had a more limited sense signifying honesty and truth (cf. Pinkster 1998). On a semantic axis of meaning, *verus* can be placed on the axes of 'realitas' and 'veritas', while *verax* is limited to the latter. In section 5 the issue of the semantic map will be further discussed.

Table 1 gives an overview of the various uses that can be attested for *vraiment* in its historical development (i.e. 14th century - 2000). For the earliest periods (i.e. 1330-1600) all figures are given: for the periods between 1600 and 2000, in which *vraiment* becomes much more frequent, random samples of 200 occurrences per period were used for further analysis. Aside from our basic semantic categories (adjunct, emphatizer, intensifier, disjunct and autonomous – a category for which *vraiment* appears autonomously in an answer, a question or an exclamation), our classification also contains a specific category, called 'predicative construction', in which ambiguous cases were placed, i.e. forms that cannot unambiguously be interpreted either as emphatizers or as intensifiers. Especially in older texts, the distinction between a reading as an emphatizer on a clause level and a reading as an intensifier on a phrase level could not always be clearly made. In our data, this specifically concerns examples in which *vraiment* (or *really*) feature in a predicative construction (e.g. example 15). Willems and Demol (2006) also discuss the ambiguous nature of *vraiment* in a predicative construction.

- (15) *Celui vraiment est heureux homme.* (Frantext, 1581)

In example (15) it is difficult to tell whether *vraiment* fulfils a truth-emphatizing role with a broad scope ('That really is a lucky man') or whether it has a scope that is limited to the predicative adjective *heureux* and functions as an intensifier ('That is a really lucky man').

Table 1 also shows the specific structural level on which *vraiment* and *really* are most frequently used, i.e. clausal level for adjuncts and emphatizers, phrasal level for intensifiers and sentence level for disjuncts. For cases like example (15) a dual interpretation (i.e. on clause or phrase level) is possible.

Table 1. Division of uses for *vraiment* (actual figures)

<i>Vraiment</i>	Level	DMF		Frantext					
		1330-1500	1500-1600	1600-1700	1700-1800	1800-1900	1900-2000		
Adjunct	Clause	10	5	17	14	29	53		
Emphatizer	Clause	5	2	2	7	2	31		
Intensifier	Phrase	0	3	46	75	69	24		
Predicative construction	Clause / Phrase	5	3	48	47	60	67		
Disjunct	Sentence	19	20	80	39	35	22		
Autonomous		1	2	7	18	5	3		
Total		40	35	200	200	200	200		

Table 2 shows the syntactic positions in which *vraiment* occurs. This classification contains the 'standard' positions as mentioned in Quirk et al. (1985) (Initial, Medial, Final) as well as a separate category ('Autonomous') including parenthetical uses and autonomous uses attested in verbless clauses (e.g. examples 11-14). An additional category ('Phrasal use') contains those instances that are situated on phrase level. This includes intensifiers, which often occur in the context of an adjective phrase. Since it is difficult to tell whether a predicative construction functions on a clause level – in which case it could be classified as having a 'medial' position – or on a phrase level – in which case, a classification according to syntactic position cannot be applied –, these cases were classified as 'Medial / Phrasal use' in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of syntactic positions for *vraiment* (actual figures)

<i>Vraiment</i>	DMF	Frantext					
		1330-1500	1500-1600	1600-1700	1700-1800	1800-1900	1900-2000
Initial	18	20	61	32	11		15
Medial	5	0	12	18	23		49
Final	10	4	13	2	11		23
Autonomous	2	3	11	22	14		6
Phrasal use	0	5	55	79	81		40
Medial / Phrasal use	5	3	48	47	60		67
Total	40	35	200	200	200		200

The figures from Table 1 indicate that already in its earliest occurrences in the 14th century, *vraiment* shows a remarkable variety of usage and is attested in all its present-day uses, except for that of intensifier. The earliest occurrence dates from 1340 where *vraiment* already appears as a disjunct in parenthetical position and functions as a subjective strengthener (example 16).

- (16) Se ce ne faites, **vraiment**, je vous en tennay pour trop fol. (DMF, 1340)
[Si vous ne le faites pas, vraiment, je vous tiendrai pour trop fou.]

[If you do not do it, really, I consider you mad.]

In the earliest stages (14th - end 16th century), the use of *vraiment* as a disjunct is by far the most frequent, with 19 out of 40 occurrences (1330-1500) and 20 out of 35 occurrences (1500-1600) respectively. The syntactic overview in Table 2 shows that *vraiment* most frequently features in initial position in this earliest period (1330-1600). This can be connected to its frequent use as a disjunct (cf. Table 1) and is therefore not unexpected.

Around 1550, the first possible use of *vraiment* as an intensifier is attested (example 17).

- (17) C'est chose saige, et **vraiment** grave, de faire le fol quelquefois. (Frantext, 1550)

[C'est une chose savante, et vraiment sérieuse, de faire le fou quelquefois.]
[It is a skilful and really serious matter, to act mad sometimes.]

In this example the scope is more restricted, i.e. limited to the adjective *grave*, compared to contexts in which *vraiment* appears as a disjunct.

Figures from Table 1 show that *vraiment* still has a high percentage of disjunct uses (40%, i.e. 80 / 200 occurrences) in the 17th century, but this is complemented by an increase in the intensifier use (46 out of 200 occurrences (17th century) – compared to only 3 out of 35 occurrences in the preceding period (16th century)) (example 18).

- (18) Nous avons veu, Madame, object **vraiment** pieux! Mardochee en estat triste et calamiteux. (Frantext, 1601)

[We saw, Madam, something really pitiful! Mardochee in a sad and calamitous state.]

By the 18th century, the intensifying use of *vraiment* has become the most important one (37.5% or 75 / 200 occurrences). At the same time, a clear decrease of the use of *vraiment* as a disjunct can be noticed (39 / 200 or 19.5% compared to the earlier 40%). The relationship between the intensifying and the more pragmatic disjunct use of *vraiment* remains the same throughout the 19th century.

In terms of position, the 17th century also shows a change: whereas *vraiment* first appears primarily in initial position, its occurrence in medial position increases from the (late) 17th century onwards (12 / 200 compared to 0 / 35 occurrences in the 16th century – cf. Table 2), and this even becomes the most frequent position in present-day French (cf. Table 2).

The higher frequency of *vraiment* in medial position correlates with an increase in the use of *vraiment* as an adjunct from the 19th century on (cf. Tables 1 and 3).

- (19) Ce farceur de Bordenave avait **vraiment** donné l'adresse à trop de monde, toute la salle de la veille allait y passer. (Frantext, 1880)

[That clown of a Bordenave had really given the address to too many people, the entire audience of the day before was going to pay a visit.]

- (20) Vous aurez équilibré à peu près les forces et obtenu une représentation nationale qui **vraiment** représentera toutes les puissances de la nation. (Frantext, 1880)

[You will more or less have balanced the strengths and obtained a national representation that really represents all the powers of the nation.]

The increase of the autonomous use of *vraiment* in the 18th century (Tables 1 and 2; example 21) can, to a certain extent, be explained by the presence of dialogues in the corpus material for that period (61 dialogues on a total of 200 text excerpts), a text genre in which *vraiment* often occurs as an independent answer, question or exclamation, possibly combined with *oui* or *non* or preceded by *mais*.

- (21) Géronte: Ne seroit-ce point la maison de madame Bertrand?

Merlin: Justement, de madame Bertrand; la voilà: c'est une bonne acquisition, n'est-ce pas?

Géronte: Oui **vraiment**. Mais pourquoi cette femme-là vend-elle ses héritages? (Frantext, 1700)

[Géronte: Would that not be the house of Mrs Bertrand? – Merlin: Indeed, of Mrs Bertrand; there it is: it's a good purchase, is it not? – Géronte: Yes really. But why does that woman sell her inheritance?]

Similarly to its present-day autonomous use, *vraiment* can already suggest a notion of subjectivity as in example (22) where *vraiment* stresses the fact that the speaker is surprised.

- (22) Géronte: Je crois, si je ne me trompe, que voilà Merlin.

Merlin: Mais **vraiment**! C'est monsieur Géronte lui-même, ou c'est le diable sous sa figure. Sérieusement parlant, seroit-ce vous, mon cher maître?

Géronte: Oui, c'est moi, Merlin. (Frantext, 1700)

[Géronte: I believe that, if I am not mistaken, there comes Merlin. – Merlin: But really! It is Sir Géronte himself, or it is the devil disguised as him. Seriously, would that be you, my dear master? – Géronte: Yes, it is me, Merlin.]

Our historical data confirm that *vraiment* has indeed known a double evolution, through which the adverb has developed a clear pragmatic use as an attitudinal disjunct from the very start, and additionally acquired an intensifying use which implies an increased level of grammaticalization and a restriction in terms of scope. Despite the decrease in the intensifying use of *vraiment* that can be seen in the beginning of the 20th century, this use seems to have become extremely popular again in present-day spoken French (cf. Table 3) – and stands more or less in competition with the more colloquial adverb *vachement* (comparable to English 'bloody'). However, where the use of *vachement* is rather limited because of its informal nature (only 56 occurrences were found in *Corpaix*), *vraiment* is more neutral when it comes to register, hence its success as an intensifier (1041 occurrences in *Corpaix*). Only *très* ('very') is more frequent as an intensifier (3032 occurrences in *Corpaix*) perhaps because of the fact that this adverb necessarily indicates a degree, whereas the use of *vraiment* is more multifunctional.

Table 3. Division of uses for *vraiment* in present-day French (actual figures)

<i>Vraiment</i>	Level	Written (FranText 1999-2000)	Spoken (Corpaix)	Total
Adjunct	Clause	63	25	88
	Clause	49	35	84
Emphasizer	Phrase	9	8	17
	Phrase	52	105	157
Intensifier	Clause / Phrase	17	10	27
Predicative construction	Sentence	5	14	19
Disjunct		5	3	8
Autonomous		200	200	400

The 20th century is also characterized by an increase in the emphasizing use of *vraiment*. Strangely enough, we also see an increase in the use of *vraiment* as an adjunct, especially for written French (cf. Table 1 and Table 3; example 23).

- (23) Le régiment s'éteint, se réveille *vraiment*, et lève doucement ses faces dans l'argent doré du premier rayon. (FranText, 1916)

[The regiment stretches, really awakens, and softly raises its sides in the golden silver of the first sunbeam.]

The fact that the increase of the adjunct use is more significant in written than in spoken French is inversely proportional to the higher frequency of the intensifying use in spoken language. An explanation for this increase perhaps lies in a difference in text genre. More specifically, the absence of philosophic texts in our corpus

material for the 19th - 20th century might orient *vraiment* not only towards the axis of *veritas*, but also towards the axis of *realitas*, which generally implies a more concrete and referential denotation (cf. sections 4.3. and 5) aside from a truth-emphasizing use.

The increase in adjunct uses could also be expected to correlate with an increase in the use of activity verbs. However, while the presence of activity verbs has in fact more than doubled (cf. 6 / 200 in the 19th century compared to 15 / 200 occurrences in the 20th century), we can also see an increase in mental verbs as well as existential verbs. Furthermore, the frequency of activity verbs is significantly lower for *vraiment* than this is the case for *really* (cf. 4.3.).

Vraiment indeed seems to have a general preference for existential and mental verbs (cf. Table 4). This can be seen as proof of the subjective, evaluative nature of the contexts in which *vraiment* appears. Combined with existential and mental verbs, *vraiment* implies a judgement and therefore necessarily conveys information on the truth level of the sentence. The fact that *vraiment* often appears in a predicative construction (cf. example 15) may confirm this hypothesis, and explains why verbs of existence are the most represented for all periods whereas mental verbs only become more frequent from 1900 onwards.

Table 4. Classification of semantic verb fields for *vraiment* (actual figures)

<i>Vraiment</i>	DMF		FranText			
	1330-1500	1500-1600	1600-1700	1700-1800	1800-1900	1900-2000
Existential	7	4	45	53	63	73
Mental	6	0	9	7	8	39
Activity	0	4	5	2	6	15
Spatial	1	0	1	2	0	3
Communication	1	0	1	0	6	4
Causative	0	0	0	2	0	4
Aspectual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occurrence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not applicable	25	27	139	134	117	62
Total	40	35	200	200	200	200

4.3. The semantic-pragmatic development of *really*

While the historical development of *really* shows a number of similarities to that of *vraiment*, *really* appears to follow a more linear development from adverb to disjunct and / or intensifier, and starts developing much later than its French counterpart.

The origin of English *really* can be found in the post-classical Latin form *realiter* ('actually, in fact') which is an adverbial derivation of the classical Latin adjective *realis*. Although *really* does not appear in our data before the 17th century, the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Middle English Dictionary* state that the first occurrences of *really* are found in the 15th century where they are purely referential

– as in example (24) where *really* has the meaning 'in a real manner, in actual fact'. In this illustration *really* is equalled to *bodily* and contrasted to the adverbial form *figurally*.

- (24) pou arte in this sacrame[n]te not figurally but **really** and bodily (MED, *realli adv.* (a): 1450)

In (25) a similar contrast between a physical reality and a figurative or assumed reality is made, contrasting *riallliche* ('really') to *ymagynatiffliche* ('in imagination'), *presentatiffliche* ('in a representative manner') and *veruallliche* ('in effect'), and equalling it to *soothliche* ('truly, actually'), *bodilliche* ('substantially, in person'), *presentliche* ('in actual presence'), and *verreyliche* ('truly').

- (25) With inne this bred al the souereyn good is put, soothliche, nouht ymagynatiffliche, nouht presentatiffliche, nouht veruallliche, with oute more but it is put ther inne and contened bodilliche and **riallliche**, presentliche and verreyliche, with oute any simlacioun and with oute oother decepcoun or gile. (MED, *realli adv.* (b): 1450)

Based on our historical corpus data we find that the earliest occurrences of *really* date from the early 17th century (cf. Table 5).

Table 5. Division of uses for *really* (actual figures)

<i>Really</i>	Level	HC & CED		Clmtelev			
		1500-1650	1650-1760	1710-1780	1780-1850	1850-1920	
Adjunct	Clause	0	3	10	0	0	
Emphasizer	Clause	2	54	150	155	160	
Intensifier	Phrase	0	2	11	12	29	
Predicative	Clause /	0	2	10	1	7	
Construction	Phrase						
Disjunct	Sentence	0	26	17	27	3	
Autonomous		0	3	2	5	1	
Total		2	90	200	200	200	

Both of these instances can be classified as *emphasizers*, as in example (26).

- (26) I am as I tell you, an honest good fellow, and a shoemaker, and for the loue I beare to all kinde shoemakers, I haue made thus bound to come and drinke with you. [They asked Smug to join them, which he did. After a while, one of the shoemakers grew suspicious of Smug, believing that he was **really** a smith. When he spied Smug's hammer, he informed his friends of Smug's deception.] (CED, Thomas Brewer, *Deuill of Edmonou*: 1631)

In this case *really* no longer refers to an objective reality, as it did in example (24) for instance, but rather emphasizes the truth level of the modified proposition, and

specifically does so from the subjective perspective of the speaker. Through this emphasis a contrast is created with existing expectations, or with implications that can be drawn from the preceding context (i.e. he made everyone believe he was a shoemaker – but instead he was in reality a smith). In the data from the HC, 5 occurrences (out of a total of 11) indicate a similar (explicit or implied) contrast that is underlined by the use of *really*, as do both early 17th century uses from the CED. Throughout the different periods of our historical data, the *emphasizing* use of *really* remains the most frequent one (cf. Table 5), correlating with the fact that the majority of occurrences is placed in medial position (cf. Table 6).

Table 6. Classification of syntactic positions for *really* (actual figures)

<i>Really</i>	HC & CED		Clmtelev			
	1500-1650	1650-1760	1710-1780	1780-1850	1850-1920	
Initial	0	26	17	26	2	
Medial	2	55	159	154	160	
Final	0	2	1	1	0	
Autonomous	0	3	2	6	2	
Phrasal Use	0	2	11	12	29	
Medial / Phrasal use	0	2	10	1	7	
Total	2	90	200	200	200	

The late 17th century is an interesting period for *really*, since the adverb then develops two additional uses which – comparable to the development of *vraiement* – can be seen as proof of a double movement towards grammaticalized as well as pragmaticalized uses. On the one hand, *really* starts acquiring intensifying uses. The form takes scope over adjectives and scalar verbs, resulting in a restricted, narrow scope and a heightened indication of degree – as in example (27).

- (27) Madam, interrupted Worthygrace, Mr. Stopwell wrongs the Court-Ladies; some of which are **really** Great Beauties, who frequently do bless this Park. (CED, Alexander Oldis, *The Female Gallant*: 1692)

Example (27) has an ambiguous context, in the sense that it enables two possible readings of *really*, viz. either as an *emphasizer* ([*are really*] + [*great beauties*]) or as an *intensifier* modifying the adjective *great* ([*are*] + [*really great*] + [*beauties*]). In nearly all cases, this ambiguity between a clausal *emphasizer* reading and an initial transition towards a phrasal, intensifying reading, may in part be due to the influence of the copular verb 'to be', creating a predicative construction in which the emphasis on the truthfulness of the proposition can relate to the clause as well as to the predicative adjective. These cases are indicated separately in Table 5.

Secondly, and also in the second half of the 17th century, *really* acquires more pragmatic meanings as an attitudinal disjunct, with a fronted syntactic position and a correlating broader scope, as in:

- (28) So we are like to be rich, whilst you are laying heavy taxes on us above, and at the same time sending down printed papers to confound the brains of our workmen, and draw them away from helping us to get money to pay them; [Shopkeeper:] **Really** Sir, this honest freeholder speaks a great deal of truth, for I am sure I have lost more in my way of trading by my prentices running to the coffee-houses to read the news, than by all the taxes of the late reign, and yet there was no reason to complain of the smallness of them neither. (CED, Anon., *Member of Parliament*: 1703)

Example (28) foregrounds the speaker's perspective on the truth of the entire sentence, and therefore also testifies to a higher level of subjectivity. This is underlined and repeated by the use of *I am sure* in the same sentence.

By the 18th century *really* has acquired a range of meanings, functioning as a marker of subjective emphasis or of degree. *Really* also frequently occurs as a sentence-initial or final disjunct, or autonomously in a 'verbless question' or exclamation (e.g. examples 29-30).

- (29) "And how long, ma'arn, have you tried this petrifying place?"
"An hour,--two hours, I believe," she answered.
"**Really?** and nobody here! *assez de monde*, but nobody here! a blank *paroi!*" (Climeley, Fanny Burney, *Cecilia*: 1782)
- (30) Baron: "I'll tell you in a few words why I sent for you. Count Cassel is here, and wishes to marry my daughter.
Anhalt [much concerned]: **Really!**
Baron: He is--he--in a word I don't like him. (Climeley, Elisabeth Inchbald, *Lover's vows*: 1798)

The intensifying function of *really* steadily increases from the beginning of the 18th century on, and shows a rise in frequency from the 19th century (cf. Table 5). The form's intensifying uses indicate a high degree of semantic bleaching, having moved away from their initial reference to reality which was more clearly visible in the earliest intensifying uses (set in a predicative construction) from the 17th century (cf. example 27). As an intensifier, *really* has a limited (phrasal) scope and indicates a high level of grammaticalization. Also in the 19th century, a decrease in disjunct uses can be noticed (from 26 to 3 / 200 occurrences). In present-day data from the *British National Corpus* (cf. Table 7), the disjunct category again shows a higher frequency (17.5%), perhaps through the frequent use of disjuncts in spoken data (55 out of 200 spoken occurrences). The emphasizing use remains the most frequent (59%).

Table 7. Division of uses for *really* in present-day English (actual figures)

<i>Really</i>	Level	BNC		
		Written	Spoken	Total
Adjunct	Clause	0	0	0
Emphasizer	Clause	140	96	236
Intensifier	Phrase	25	30	55
Predicative	Clause / Phrase	9	4	13
Construction				
Disjunct	Sentence	15	55	70
Autonomous		11	15	26
Total		200	200	400

While our samples from present-day data show that intensifiers are definitely not the most frequent use for *really*, Bolinger (1972) and Stenström (1986) have signalled that *really* might be developing further to a clear intensifier and is becoming extremely popular in present-day English, especially in teenage conversation.

Paradis (2003) stresses that the contrastive aspect of *really*, which was seen in early occurrences, is still very visible in present-day functions, particularly in emphasizing uses. As was shown at the start of this section (4.3.), *really* has its origins in what can be called the 'physical world', and in its earliest attested uses frequently underlines a contrast between an empirical reality and a symbolic or assumed reality. As a truth-attester, *really* is later used to emphasize the speaker's perspective on reality. As is the case for *vraiment* (cf. 4.2.), *really* is most likely to occur with verbs of existence and mental verbs (cf. Table 8). However, in contrast to *vraiment*, *really* also frequently co-occurs with activity verbs (e.g. in up to 18% of all occurrences from the period 1850-1920). This difference can be connected to the core semantics of *really*, which may be described as being essentially more concrete and connected to an objective reality, in contrast to *vraiment* which proves to be more subjective and evaluative in nature.

Table 8. Classification of semantic verb fields for *really* (actual figures)

<i>Really</i>	HC & CED			Climeley		BNC	
	1500-1650	1650-1760	1710-1780	1780-1850	1850-1920	Written	Spoken
Existential	2	25	101	78	69	53	46
Mental	0	15	28	38	42	45	27
Activity	0	10	21	30	36	31	17
Spatial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communication	0	6	5	6	2	2	4
Causative	0	0	2	1	4	0	1
Aspectual	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Occurrence	0	1	3	2	5	7	1
Not applicable	0	33	40	45	40	60	104
Total	2	90	200	200	200	200	200

4.4. *Conclusions from a contrastive perspective*

A comparison of the data for both languages reveals some interesting differences and similarities. Whereas *vraiment* already appears in all its present-day functions from the 14th century onwards – except for that of intensifier which only occurs from the 16th century on, *really* is only attested from the 15th century (i. e. based on data from the OED and MED) and functions strictly as an adjunct for the first two centuries. From the beginning, *vraiment* displays more variety in its uses and is faster to develop a pragmatic value compared to its English counterpart.

In the case of *vraiment*, it is difficult to talk about a real 'development' of uses, since they are all simultaneously present from the very start. Of course, a more gradual development might very well have taken place before the 14th century, but unfortunately we do not have any data at our disposal for this earlier period. As soon as *vraiment* develops an intensifying use (mid 16th century), the adverb gives evidence for a double meaning extension. It not only evolves towards a fronted position and a widened scope, having then a pragmatic value as a disjunct, but at the same time, *vraiment* becomes used at phrase level as an intensifier, where it has a limited scope and takes on a more grammaticalized function.

Really evolves more gradually than *vraiment* does, with a development that starts with a clear adjunct use, towards predominating emphasizing uses, taking on a dual development towards disjunct uses as well as intensifying uses from the 17th century onwards.

Vraiment becomes more frequent as an intensifier from the 17th century on. For *really* this is the case from the 19th century. Both *vraiment* and *really* have become popular intensifiers in the last decades of the 20th century (cf. Table 3 for *vraiment* and Bolinger (1972) and Stenström (1986) for *really*). The disjunct use decreases from the 18th century onwards for *vraiment* and from the 19th century on for *really*. However, in English, a new increase of *really* as a disjunct can be noticed in present-day discourse, whereas *vraiment* stabilizes in its decrease. While the emphasizing use has always been a rather marginal use of *vraiment* throughout its development, it is the most frequent use for *really* in all analyzed stages. Strikingly, we also see that the strictly referential, adverbial use of *vraiment* has known a revival from the 19th century on, which might explain why *vraiment* can still be used as an adjunct in present-day discourse while this is no longer the case for *really*. The fact that a separate category had to be integrated for ambiguous uses ('predicative construction') can be seen as proof of the fact that *vraiment* and *really* are still in the process of developing intensifying uses that are more semantically bleached.

Although *vraiment* and *really* both provide evidence of a double meaning extension, we could argue that *vraiment* is more oriented towards a grammaticalization process which manifests itself first in present-day spoken French through the convincing majority of intensifying uses (cf. Table 3) and its less represented use as a disjunct from the 18th century on. *Really* seems more oriented towards a pragmaticalization process than its French counterpart.

Within this perspective, we could argue that the subjective, evaluative nature is intrinsic to the semantics of *vraiment*, situated on the axis of 'veritas', whereas for *really* this value is triggered by pragmaticalization.

5. *Conclusions and theoretical implications*

On a semantic level a difference can be signalled between the semantic field of 'truth' which is more subjective and evaluative and the semantic field of 'reality' which can be considered more objective and concrete. This distinction can, to a certain extent, explain some of the differences in use and in pace of development for *vraiment* and *really*.

By using *vraiment*, the speaker seems to focus on the truth level of a certain reality, rather than on reality itself. From this perspective, *vraiment* can be seen as being inherently more subjective. This can be connected to the fact that *vraiment* advances very early on, compared to *really*, and already had a variety of uses, including a pragmatic use, from the 14th century onwards.

Our data show that *really* originally had a more concrete, tangible and reality-based meaning and therefore appeared in more objective contexts. It took longer for *really* to develop a more pragmatic use. In general, the development of *really* occurred more gradually than that of *vraiment*.

This semantic difference may also explain why *really* appears more often in contrastive contexts than *vraiment* does. Contexts in which *really* is opposed to notions such as *virtually* or *in imagination* (e.g. example 25) are relatively frequent, whereas this is rarely the case for *vraiment*.³ Of course a connection between the concepts of 'reality' and 'truth' has to be acknowledged, otherwise no further development would have been possible.

The pace of development of the two forms might also be influenced by a correlation with competing forms, such as *réellement*, *très* or *fort* in the case of *vraiment* and *truly*, *very* or *verily* for *really*. The availability of competing forms may have cleared the way for *vraiment* and *really* to take on pragmatic meanings, the competing forms then assuming the strictly adverbial functions that were previously also taken up by *vraiment* and *really*. In French, for instance, *réellement* is supposedly less pragmatic than *vraiment*. Also English *truly* and *verily* can be said to have different semantic connotations than *really* does (cf. Defour 2012). Comparative monolingual research that might help to clarify such connections for *vraiment* and *réellement* will form the subject of further study in the near future.

Furthermore, the results of this research should help to integrate *vraiment* and *really* in a larger semantic map of 'truth' and 'reality'. In this perspective we will consider the influence of competing forms within the same semantic field on

³ We observe that this is different for French *réellement*, which provides evidence of the close relation with its morpho-semantic cognate *really*.

the evolution of both adverbs. To obtain a better insight in the semantic fields of 'truth' and 'reality', contrastive research with other languages can be useful. For French, for example, it might be interesting to examine the differences with Italian *veramente* and *invero* which are being studied by Ricca and Visconti (2011) as well as with Portuguese cognates.

On a more theoretical level the developments of both forms give evidence of a division into two directions: a pragmaticalization process which leads to a wider scope, an emphasized speaker-perspective and more pragmatic meanings as a disjunct, and a process of grammaticalization, characterized by the fact that forms acquire a narrow scope and develop an intensifying use that is restricted to phrase level.

The fact that the movement towards grammaticalization as well as to pragmaticalization occurs more or less simultaneously jeopardizes the general acceptance that pragmaticalization follows grammaticalization and that, as soon as a form has been pragmaticalized, there is no longer place for a grammaticalization process.

In fact, the diachronic development of *vraiment* and *really* provides evidence of an analysis of grammaticalization and pragmaticalization as two independent processes. As was also stated by Dostie (2004), in the case of grammaticalization a lexical item develops grammatical, sentence-internal uses; in the case of pragmaticalization a lexical or grammatical item develops discursive functions on a conversational or pragmatic level. There is no correlation between both processes in the sense that a lexical item can directly evolve into a discourse marker, without passing through an intermediate stage of grammaticalization (cf. Erman and Kotsinas 1993).

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THE KENTISH SERMONS AS EVIDENCE OF THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH AND TRANSLATION PRACTICE¹

Abstract

This paper compares the thirteenth-century *Kentish Sermons* with their French originals composed by Maurice of Sully.

The aim is to study the influence French may have exerted on the translator when it came to choosing between competing English forms. The morphosyntactic domains under study are genitive relations (where the inflectional genitive competes with the *of*-phrase) and interclausal relations (which offer a choice between different connectives, whether adverbs or subordinators), and we build a case for a determining influence from French. In that respect our paper raises the epistemological question of the reliability of the material that historical linguists have to work on.

We also examine the relationship between the Kentish and the French homilies in the light of the different meanings the act of translation could have in the Middle Ages. The target text does not emerge so much from the fancy or habits of writing of one individual – here an anonymous translator – as from a scholarly community. As evidence of thirteenth-century translation practice, the *Kentish Sermons* can be characterized as somewhat awkwardly literal, probably because, we contend, they aim at serving the authority of a much-admired source rather than displacing it. In that respect our paper raises the question of translation theory and practice in medieval England, and should be a modest contribution to understanding vernacular translation of such audience-oriented texts.

This paper compares a set of thirteenth-century homilies, the *Old Kentish Sermons*, with their French originals, mass-homilies composed by Maurice of Sully almost a century earlier.

The aim is to study the amount of influence the French originals may have had, in terms of morphosyntax, on the English text, which is written in a dialectal variety (Kentish) we know to have been under strong French influence itself. Although – when relevant to the discussion – we will occasionally underline some faulty loan-translations, these will not be our focus. Rather, we would like to assess the influence French may have exerted on the English translator when it came to actually choosing between competing English structures. The structures are, on the one hand, the *-s* inflectional genitive and the *of*-phrase, and on the other hand different connectives, whether adverbs or subordinators, in complex sentences involving

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